

Sidney S. Alcott House
302 W. Mansion Street
Marshall
Calhoun County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-239

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7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SIDNEY S. ALLCOTT HOUSE

HABS No. MI-239

Location: 302 West Mansion Street, Marshall, Calhoun County,
Michigan.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mrs. Jessie Lee Thick.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Significance: A simple representative mid-19th century cottage with
interesting architectural details, now somewhat altered.
Under the ownership of Judge George Ingersoll, the house
was reputed to have been involved in the "underground
highway."

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Prior to 1838.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

Sidney S. Allcott	1836-1850
George Ingersoll	1850-1902
Rented	1902-1920s
1920s	E. E. Simmons
Late 1950s	Arthur Grey
1965	Mrs. Jessie Lee Thick
4. Original plans and construction: The house is still equipped with
the original door bell of the pull type. The iron bell is located
at the farther end of the front hall and operates with a steel
wire, running up to and along the ceiling.
5. Alterations and additions: The barge boards which now decorate
the gable eaves were presumably added when the Gothic Revival
became the popular architectural style. The porch has undoubtedly
had alteration or changes through the years.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Common rectangular layout; steep gable
roof; one-story entrance porch; simple decorative trim; central
hall floor plan.

2. Condition of fabric: Generally good, throughout.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 30' x 34', exclusive of front porch; rear wing about 25' x 18'. The front faces south. The main portion is 3 bays by 3 bays.
2. Foundations: There is a high brick foundation, about four feet above ground, now painted, terminated by a two-brick-course projecting water table.
3. Walls: Walls above the water table are brick, stuccoed and painted. The date of the stucco work is not evident.
4. Structural system, framing: Floor and roof construction is wood.
5. Porch: A three-bay porch, one bay deep, extends across the south front. It is modern. There are six steps up to the wooden floor, four round wood columns and three-piece entablature, and a roof of low pitch.

Physical evidence seen does not give any clue to an original porch, if any.

6. Chimney: There is a plain brick chimney near the northeast corner of the main (original) part of the house. It appears to have been rebuilt, at least in part.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The entrance is centered on the south front; it is framed by two Doric pilasters, with an echinus in the capital, which carry an entablature consisting of a narrow architrave, narrow frieze, and modified cornice. The bed moulding of this cornice consists of a cavetto with an echinus above; the remainder consists of a corona in three narrow bands, the central one recessed.

The door, which may be later than the frontispiece, is deeply recessed in the brick opening, which has paneled wooden jambs and soffit. The door has four moulded panels, whose corners are concave; a pair of low ones and a pair of glazed tall ones above. Each glass is ornamented by an etched beaded border and a central floral spray. The door is 1-3/4" thick, hung on three original butts of cast iron. It has a mortice lock and porcelain knob. Beside it is the knob of an original call bell; this bell, which is operative, is located in the rear of the hall, connected with the knob by pivoted levers and wires.

- b. Windows: Windows have plain trim; two on the first floor, south front, have trim extending to the water table. Generally, windows have modern double-hung sash and storm sash.

Two-second-story windows on the south, in the gable, retain sash with six lights over six lights. These openings have a horizontal cornice at their heads, consisting of a cavetto at the top, and a pendant ornament below it.

In the south gable is a small round louvered opening, at attic level; in the north gable is a small round window. There are three basement windows on each long side. There are no shutters.

8. Roof: The roof is now covered with asphalt composition shingles. The pitch of the original part is about 12/12; that of the rear addition is lower. Modern sheet metal gutters hang at the edge of the cornice. There are no dormers.

The south gable is treated with an ornamental wooden arched truss. At each of the two lower corners is a bracket with a pendant.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The first floor has a central hall extending from the entrance to the rear wall, widening after a vestibule to accommodate a stair at the west side. On each side of this hall are two major rooms; the pair on the east are joined by a wide opening. In the rear addition are a dining room, kitchen and rear entry. The second floor, over the original portion only, has two major bedrooms east of the central hall, and three smaller rooms on the west; the one at the front extends across the central bay. The one at the rear is now a bathroom, and the one between is a storage space. These second-story rooms have a sloping ceiling along the east and west exterior sides.

There is a full basement under the original portion; it is thought that it originally contained the kitchen and dining room.

2. Stairways: The stair rises in a straight flight, beginning at the north (rear) end of the hall. It has 18 risers, 7-3/4" high each. It has an open string, with ornamental brackets whose line is continued along the edge of the well by an undulating floral strapwork band. There is a heavy turned walnut newel, moulded walnut handrail, and two turned walnut balusters per tread. Treads have a moulded nosing. The railing at the second-story well is similar.

3. Flooring: The original second-story floors have been covered. First-story floors are single pine boards, 4-3/4" to 5-1/2" wide.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceiling are plastered and papered. Rooms have no cornices, except the first-story hall, which has a wooden cornice consisting of a cavetto, fillet, and crowning ovolo. The southwest room of the first story has a simple plaster centerpiece in the ceiling.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: First-story doors are 1-3/8" thick and have two vertical moulded panels; architrave trim is 5-3/4" wide, with an inner bead, two fascias, quirked cyma reversa and outer fillet.

Second-story doors are five-panel; the intermediate one is horizontal and there are a pair of tall panels at the top, with a lower pair at the bottom. Panels are simply moulded and have raised fields. Openings have architrave trim, with two fascias.

Doors and trim are painted.
 - b. Windows: First-story window trim is similar to first-story doorway trim, and it extends to the floor, with two vertical panels below the stool.

Second-story window trim is similar to second-story doorway trim.
6. Decorative trim: First-story rooms have a high moulded base; second-story rooms have a plain base consisting of two fascias, and a narrow picture moulding at the ceiling.
7. Hardware: Doors are hung on two cast-iron butts. They have mortice locks and porcelain knobs.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Original heating was by means of the fireplaces. A simple brick fireplace in the northeast room appears modern; it has a ceramic tile hearth which also appears modern.
 - b. Lighting: No original fixtures remain.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This house occupies a level corner lot, at the northwest corner of Mansion and North Grand Streets. There is a modern concrete walk, and a modern garage at the rear (north). Landscaping is informal.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Property records. Place of repository not indicated. It is suggested that they may be kept at the Calhoun County clerk's office.

"Nineteenth Century Houses of Marshall, Michigan." Unpublished doctoral dissertation by Mabel R. Cooper, student at the Florida State University, 1963.

Prepared by: George E. Ruddock
Historian, Marshall
Historical Society
August 26, 1965
(historical information)

Harley J. McKee
Architect, Historic American
Buildings Survey (HABS)
August 10, 1965
(architectural information)

Edited by: Susan McCown
Historian, Historic American
Buildings Survey (HABS)
November 14, 1984